

Message Text

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E. O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EWWT, BEXP, BDIS, NI

SUBJ: EMBARGO ON CONTAINER DELIVERIES IN PORT OF LAGOS

REF : LAGOS 9788

BEGIN UNCLASSIFIED

1. NEWEST CHALLENGE IN LAGOS PORT IS IMPENDING BAN ON INCOMING STEEL CONTAINERS. SHIPPING AGENCIES IN LAGOS HAVE BEEN NOTIFIED BY NIGERIAN PORTS AUTHORITY (NPA) THAT NO MORE CONVENTIONAL STEEL CONTAINERS (8X20FT, 9X9 FT) WILL BE ALLOWED DELIVERY IN NIGERIA IF BILLS OF LADING ISSUED LATER THAN OCTOBER 20. AGENTS HAVE NOTIFIED LINES IN US AND ELSEWHERE. BAN EFFECTS SHIPS USING PRIORITY AS WELL AS NON-PRIORITY BERTHS, AND IS EXPECTED TO LAST 2-4 MONTHS.

2. MOVE IS ONE MORE IN CURRENT SERIES OF MEASURES TO DECONGEST PORT (REFTEL). PURPOSE IS TO PROVIDE UNINTERRUPTED PERIOD TO COLLECT, INVENTORY AND DISTRIBUTE CONTAINERS. BUILD-UP OF CONTAINERS IN PAST 2 MONTHS HAS CLEARLY EXCEEDED OFFICIAL AND SHIPPING COMMUNITY PROJECTIONS. 11,500 CONTAINERS NOW UNOFFICIALLY ESTIMATED AS TOTAL VOLUME EN ROUTE TO OR ALREADY IN NIGERIAN PORTS.

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3. MAIN IMPETUS FOR EMBARGO REPORTEDLY CAME FROM UK AND CONTINENTAL CONFERENCES. SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATION FOR EMBARGO PROPOSED IN STUDY MADE DURING PAST SEVERAL MONTHS BY EUROPEAN CONSULTATION-MANAGEMENT CONSORTIUM. TWO MEMBERS OF THIS GROUP, J. M. GERCKENS (WEST GERMANY) AND CONSOLIDATED CONTAINER SERVICES LTD. (UK) EMERGED RECENTLY TO CAPTURE JOINT CONTRACT FOR MANAGEMENT OF ALL CONTAINER HANDLING IN LAGOS PORT. THEY WILL OVERSEE NEW PROGRAM.

4. SHIPPING LINES HERE NOT OPPOSING MEASURE. FARRELL LINES, FOR EXAMPLE, DISCHARGES AVERAGE OF 20PC OF CARGO IN CONTAINERS. BELIEVED EMBARGO PERIOD NECESSARY TO TIDY UP SITUATION AND THAT NO SERIOUS PROBLEM IMPOSED ON US EXPORTERS BECAUSE MOST GOODS CAN COME VIA BREAK-BULK SHIPMENTS FOR WHICH MOST CARGO SHIPS CALLING ON NIGERIA ARE DESIGNED. OTHER LINES INTERVIEWED BY US EXPRESS SIMILAR VIEW, POINTING OUT THAT TEMPORARY INCONVENIENCES WILL BE COMPENSATED FOR BY MORE ORDERLY, SECURE AND RAPID SYSTEM OF CONTAINER HANDLING TO BE INSTALLED "WITHIN FEW MONTHS." EMBASSY FEELS THIS OUTLOOK MAY PROVE TOO SANGUINE. W.A.C.A.S.C., FOR EXAMPLE, WHICH PERFORMS BROAD RANGE OF SUPPLY SERVICES FOR AMERICAN GOVERNMENT MISSIONED IN WEST AFRICA, RECEIVES MOST OF SHIPMENTS IN CONTAINERS. SWITCHING TO BREAK-BULK DELIVERY MAY SIGNIFICANTLY RAISE INCIDENCE OF DAMAGE AND PILFERAGE. SAME PROBLEM EXISTS FOR PRODUCERS OF DELICATE EQUIPMENT SUCH AS TELECOMMUNICATIONS SECTOR.

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